

EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN: AN AREA OF GROWING INTERDEPENDENCE

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to show several areas (societal sectors) of interdependence between the two halves of the Euro-Mediterranean region. The northern half of the region (in its widest geographical sense the EU) and the southern half (Maghreb and Mashreq countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea) have several common security issues and interests which makes them highly interdependent. After going through the main issue areas of interdependence, the core assumption of the study will be lined out, which argues that Europe and the Mediterranean reached such a high level of security interdependence that they can be treated now as a single security complex.

Keywords: Europe, EU, Mediterranean, security complex theory, interdependence

Introduction

This article studies the interdependence between Europe and the South-Mediterranean region through the detailed assessment of the common military, political, societal and environmental issues, which form the most important inter-regional ties between them. These four sectors of interdependence are examined in detail with the purpose of showing the viability of the main assumption of the article, which is that Europe and the Mediterranean reached such a high level of security interdependence that they can be treated now as a single security complex. Barry Buzan's Regional Security Complex Theory suggests that if two regions are "so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another"⁵⁵ then they form a single security complex. Building on the initial work of Astrid Boening⁵⁶, who first suggested that Europe and the Mediterranean could be analyzed as a single security complex, we will prove this assumption by collecting

⁵⁵ Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003): *Regions and Powers*, Cambridge University P., p.44

⁵⁶ Astrid B. Boening (2008): *Pronouncements of its Impending Demise were Exaggerated: The Euro-Med Partnership Morphing into a Regional Security Super Complex*

the concrete issue areas of interdependence and show that their depth absolutely justifies this assessment.

The military sector and hard security issues

To prove our assumption on interdependence we have to start with the analysis of common Euro-Mediterranean hard security issues. The most important of these are: 1) Institutional co-operation on foreign and security policy 2) Combating terrorism and promoting disarmament together with the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and 3) Fight against organized crime, drugs and economic crime and promoting law enforcement cooperation.

1) Institutional co-operation on foreign and security policy is a really diverse area, therefore we will have to focus only on the most important factors. These are: cooperation in jointly agreed areas of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), participation in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, cooperation through the UN framework and cooperation in regional crisis areas: Palestine, Western Sahara and Lebanon. Finally, cooperation on the ongoing civil war in Syria has to be mentioned too.

Participation in the work of the EU's common security-related institutions (CFSP and ESDP) is far the least visible form of cooperation. As CFSP and ESDP are themselves still "young" and quite underdeveloped areas of the EU's common policies one cannot expect serious relevance from them regarding the Mediterranean countries either. The only Mediterranean partner yet involved in CFSP dialogue is Jordan. Still, in this area we might see some progress in the future as the EU is constantly trying to engage with the militaries of its southern neighbors therefore this cooperation must have been mentioned here. It will be also more and more visible in the future as the EU needs to develop the CFSP to guarantee its own security.

On the other hand, participation in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue shows a more intense engagement from both sides. This "platform" can be seen as the main tool of EU-MENA⁵⁷ cooperation on security issues, therefore it has a huge relevance for our study as well. Containing all NATO members plus seven Mediterranean partners (including Israel) it is the main consultation platform not only between EU-MENA army chiefs but also for military leaders of MENA countries amongst themselves. Furthermore, NATO's relevance in the region is obviously important not only because the EU alone have no capabilities to

⁵⁷The MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) is understood here in a narrower geographical sense and means only the countries of the region which are on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, therefore having common sea border with the EU.

maintain peace in the MENA but also because of the active role NATO played recently in the region. Although the "Iraqi Freedom" operation was widely perceived negatively in the region, more recently the no-flight zone operation in Libya was seen more positively. This action was a common NATO-EU success which gave also more relevance to the Mediterranean Dialogue and Libya, a former NATO enemy got already invited: in the 2012 Chicago Summit, NATO heads of states issued a declaration citing Libya was "welcome" as a NATO partner "if it so wishes", through the Mediterranean Dialogue.⁵⁸

Cooperation through the UN and the cooperation in crisis areas shows a mixed picture. There are several crisis areas in the region but the most problematic issues are the following: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Western Sahara conflict and the conflict in Lebanon. UN-EU-MENA cooperation in Palestine is widespread: the EU is a main financial donor of the Palestinian state while the UN has a longstanding mission (UNRWA) in the area promoting peace. Jordan and Egypt play also an important supportive role in the peace process. Unfortunately all these efforts seem to be fruitless yet and the process shows no linear progress, rather cyclical ups and downs. Still this conflict remains one of the most important elements of EU-MENA security interdependence. The conflict in Western Sahara is also a longstanding problem of the region where we can witness some UN-EU-MENA cooperation. As the main source of Algerian-Moroccan tensions, this conflict has already wrecked some regional cooperation initiatives (the Arab Maghreb Union for instance) and it's highly relevant for the EU as well. Here the roles are again that the EU gives financial help while the UN has a mission to maintain peace (MINURSO), but in this case we cannot talk about any supportive role of local regimes. In Lebanon the setting is quite the same: there is a UN peace-keeper contingent (UNIFIL) and some financial support from the EU, but long-term stability can't be reached as powers in the region are not supportive of the peace process (Iran, Syria and Israel).

After the three "frozen conflicts" described above, we also have to mention the ongoing civil war in Syria. As a UN Security Council resolution was not possible in this case, we cannot speak of UN-EU-MENA cooperation here but this conflict has a serious importance for EU-MENA relations anyway. EU-NATO inactivity in this case can seriously backfire later as there will be far less pro-western elements in Syria's new government once the current regime collapses. This could trigger tensions and negatively affect the "governability" of EU-Syria relations later.

⁵⁸Source: The Official Host Committee Website for the Chicago NATO Summit, <http://www.chicagonato.org/>

2) Combating terrorism and promoting disarmament is another highly important issue of EU-MENA interdependence: main actors in this area include different regional branches of Al-Qaeda and other armed groups which are highly active in the region. Besides the already mentioned conflict in Syria where currently several armed groups fight the government with different ideological backgrounds (not all of which are West-friendly!), in Libya there are also several armed groups still in "operation" after the end of the civil war there. Other groups, like Hamas in Gaza or Hezbollah in Lebanon are also presenting serious concerns for the EU, therefore will have to be dealt with in some form. On the long term all of these groups will have to be disarmed and this should be reflected as a main EU priority. The latest negative developments in this area include the re-activation of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali, which is largely the effect of the Libyan civil war and had to be dealt with through the UN Security Council. AQIM is also active in Algeria, Libya and Mauritania which gives further challenges for the EU on the long term.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is another highly sensitive issue: Libya, Syria, Algeria and Egypt all have stocks of different WMDs: they don't possess any nuclear weapons but chemical and even biological weapons they all have. To ensure that in the present turbulent times these weapons are not falling into the hands of AQIM or other armed groups is a high priority for the EU and shows a sensitive side of interdependence. On the long term, disarmament of WMDs (and light weapons too) should be on the agenda and be implemented in exchange for the EU's financial engagement in the MENA.

3) Fight against organized crime, drugs and economic crime play also an important role in EU-MENA interdependence. Drug supply routes from Africa and South-America all cross the MENA before arriving to Europe therefore another important EU priority should be to deal with these "import" routes with common actions. Illegal drug and weapon business and human trafficking generates a lot of "black cash" which arrives mainly into European banks through money laundering. In this field the EU itself should be more effective, taking bank regulations and money-tracking more seriously. North African states (especially Morocco) are themselves drug producers, selling most of their products in Europe which can be effectively pushed back not only by more effective cooperation on border controls but also by the MENA local authorities' more aggressive actions against the local producers.

This leads us to the last issue: law enforcement cooperation. In this field EU-MENA cooperation improved a lot recently. The EU recognizing the interdependence between its own safety and the effectiveness of MENA law enforcement implemented several

cooperation projects between European and North African police forces. This helped local authorities not only to boost human capacities and the quality of their technical equipment but also improved institutional capabilities through "technical assistance". Success in this area motivates the EU to engage even more and open funds progressively for law enforcement cooperation projects in the future.

As conclusions we can identify several actors, objects and agendas in the arena of EU-MENA "hard security" relations. A clear agenda from the EU's side is to engage more deeply in the security issues of its southern neighbors with the purpose to prevent itself from security threats. Common institutional solutions to fulfill this aim include cooperation within the CFSP/ESDP agenda with the southern partners, but this cooperation is really underdeveloped yet. Another, more successful form is the cooperation within the framework of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, which could have a progressive future in the light of the recent NATO mission in Libya. Cooperation within the UN peacekeeping agenda is existing, but the "frozen conflicts" this cooperation deals with have shown no signs of progress in the last decades. Objects threatening peace in the MENA are weapons of mass destruction which are quite proliferated in the region. Although no MENA country has used them lately (even Syria withholds them during its civil war), the possibility of use is present. Controlling these WMDs and preventing them to fall into the hands of different radical armed groups should be top priority on the EU-MENA cooperation agenda.

Several different actors are making EU-MENA relations even more interdependent: Activism of the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in North-Africa and the Sahel should inform the EU about the need to fight terrorism more heavily and effectively in the region, while the disarmament of different armed groups (mainly in Libya and Mali) should be also on the top of the agenda.

Agents of organized crime, drugs, human trafficking and money laundering are also heavily present in the inter-regional ties and the EU has successfully identified the best tool to fight these: law enforcement cooperation. Growing EU activism in these fields both confirms and tries to deal with these hard security threats of inter-regional interdependence, which are well summarized by the following map (witness trafficking routes aiming to reach Europe and how they cross the huge territory controlled by AQIM and its allies)⁵⁹:

⁵⁹Image source: Morocco on the move: special report on Al-Qaeda, <http://moroccoonthemove.wordpress.com/2011/12/13/special-report-al-qaida-seeks-new-somalia-in-n-africa-w-sahara-dispute-cited-as-obstacle-to-counterinsurgency/>



Further "hard security" threats and dynamics emerging from the new post-Arab Spring setting could be elaborated here, but the main issue areas described give already a sight of strong security interdependence between the EU and the MENA and pose an effective argument to deal with these two regions as a single Security Complex.

Political sector: good governance, human rights and freedoms

In the political sector five core issues of interdependence can be clearly distinguished: 1) effectiveness of (government) institutions 2) strengthening democracy 3) rule of law 4) independent and effective administration (bureaucracy) 5) protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. All of these are affected by the Arab Spring, therefore it has to be assessed too.

The most important out of these are the ones which intend to enhance the partner countries' domestic institutional framework (1. and 4.) with the aim to promote the rule of law in the region (3). These requirements have a far reaching effects: the business environment depends largely on the quality of a given country's institutional background and one of the main business sector, tourism depends on it even more. We can see therefore these demands of the EU as the core interests of the MENA partners as well. The World Bank's ease of doing business index⁶⁰ shows us that most MENA partners (with the only exception of Tunisia) were in the lower half of the index list which indicates that there is a lot of space to progress.

Rule of law and a stable institutional background is inevitable not only for doing business in a given country but it also affects all aspects of societal progress. The main backdrop against an effective bureaucracy and good governance in MENA states is

⁶⁰See: World Bank ease of doing business: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>

corruption. Transparency International's corruption index⁶¹ places all MENA states amongst the most corrupt ones which indicates that this is a core problem of the region. An ineffective bureaucracy hostile to doing business together with corrupt politicians and decision-makers can easily ruin the prospects of economic progress in the region. This indirectly affects EU-MENA interdependence as the gloomy economic prospects and the growing crowds of the jobless youth raise a heavy migrational pressure towards the EU. Also as these conditions were triggering economic stagnation, they indirectly (and sometimes directly) presented a source of political unrest leading the region into the events of the Arab Spring.

The other main source of the unrest were the lack of democracy (2), human rights and fundamental freedoms (5). Before the Arab Spring the "request" from the EU to strengthen democracy in the region was mainly a theoretical issue. MENA states were governed mainly by autocrats and monarchs, therefore there wasn't really a democracy to strengthen. Still, even pre-Arab Spring there were issues to bring up without directly challenging the regnating governments: decentralization and a strengthening dialogue with European partner agencies. Both of these can be seen as a possible source for the (often contested) democracy-spillover effect, which states that connections with democratic counterparts in Europe through the demonstration effect could change the mentality of local officials and give the establishment a bottom-up pressure for reform. This together with decentralization of governance (and the spread of internet-penetration) can help the people avoid more effectively direct government control and undermine the government's monopoly on political life.

Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms forms also a relevant set of issues within the political agenda of EU-MENA relations. The most pressing issue here is the brutality of state police in each MENA autocracies which also added to the several sources of public unrest. (In Tunisia it was even the main triggering issue.) Human right violations were the parts of everyday life in MENA states, police assaults and imprisonment without legal verdict were common. Again, if autocrats would have cared more before the upheavals they might have prolonged their own careers as these issues mounted more and more popular unrest. The other serious human-rights related issue is the inequality of women in MENA societies. This issue brings us far from the current topic (to the values of Islam) but still, it deserves to be mentioned as the need for more freedoms for women was recognized immediately after the new governments took place in the revolting countries. For example the EU's request to "Promote the enhancement of women's participation in political, economic

⁶¹Transparency International's corruption index: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>

and social life as well as their role in the political decision-making process by supporting the formulation and implementation of Egypt's government policies and programmes"⁶² was recognized even by Mohammed Morsi's new government in Egypt who managed to include women in his new government.⁶³

Finally, freedom of association and of expression and pluralism of the media forms another huge set of issues within MENA domestic policies. Pre-Arab Spring media was completely controlled by autocratic governments and this was only lately counterbalanced by the growth of internet-penetration in the region. This issue was widely covered during the upheavals how Facebook and amateur videos of atrocities were used to maintain popular dissent and help to organize resistance against governments.⁶⁴ Pluralist media did not come by EU-advised reforms to the MENA but it came with technological development. Freedom of association was also widely controlled, therefore forcing people to illegally organize themselves, but when they openly started to "associate" on Tahrir Square it was again too late to recognize their right for it and the EU's recommendation became enforced by the people themselves.

As the several objects, actors and agendas of the political sector cannot be fully elaborated in this short study, we just took some sample elements to show EU-MENA interdependence in this area as well. Because of the recent uprisings in the Arab World (Arab Spring), this sector could be examined in much more detail but here -with the lack of space- we just have to remind us again that the engagement of the EU in the uprisings and the turmoil in EU policy making that they caused in Brussels gave a clear confirmation to this interdependence, which was far less admitted before. Summarizing our findings in this chapter, we have to conclude that all the five mentioned areas show a degree of interdependence, out of which strengthening democracy and the democratic institutional framework seems to be the most important especially as post-Arab Spring states will need a lot of EU assistance in these areas.

Societal sector: employment, education and migration

EU-MENA societal ties and interdependence is often an overlooked sector of inter-regional relations. After politics and "hard security" sectors of interdependence, the societal

⁶²Source: Egyptian Action Plan, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/egypt_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

⁶³See: Mohamed Morsi to pick woman and Christian as Egypt's vice-presidents, The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jun/26/mohamed-morsi-christian-woman-egypt>

⁶⁴See: Facebook and Twitter key to Arab Spring uprisings: report, The National, <http://www.thenational.ae/news/uae-news/facebook-and-twitter-key-to-arab-spring-uprisings-report>

sector might seem to be as having only second priority but this cannot be confirmed if we have a deeper look into the concrete set of issues.

Far the most important issue here is poverty reduction and employment which is closely related to the "management" of migration flows. The EU realizing that the main security threat steaming from the MENA is uncontrolled migration flows to its territory, made several bilateral arrangements with MENA governments on migration rewarding them for "keeping home" their potential migrants. The temporary collapse of these arrangements during the Arab Spring led to the uncontrolled flow of migrants to EU territory triggering a humanitarian crisis (most affected was Italy). On the other hand, assimilation problems with already EU-citizen migrants gave another boost of priority to this issue even before the recent "floods". The following map shows the main MENA-EU migrational patterns:⁶⁵



The "realist and short term solution" to migrational threats is being treated as only half-effective among EU policy makers now-days as it became clear that these bilateral arrangements treat only the symptoms but not the real causes of the migrational problem. The real causes are at least twofold: poverty and youth unemployment. These two issues are of course interrelated and again, they also played at least a partial role in the recent uprisings. Poverty levels are high and rising throughout the Southern Mediterranean:

⁶⁵Image source: Medsec project: <http://www.medsecnet.org/>

Number of Poor People at Alternative Poverty Lines, 1987 and 2001

Country	Number at \$2/Day (millions)		Number at \$3/Day (millions)	
	1987	2001	1987	2001
Algeria	2.3	5.1	6.4	11.2
Arab Republic of Egypt	24.2	28.6	38.0	47.6
Islamic Republic of Iran	7.0	3.5	13.9	10.1
Jordan	0.1	0.3	0.3	1.1
Morocco	3.0	4.1	7.8	9.5
Tunisia	1.3	0.5	2.7	1.7
Republic of Yemen	2.2	9.5	4.4	14.1
Total	40.1	51.6	73.5	95.3

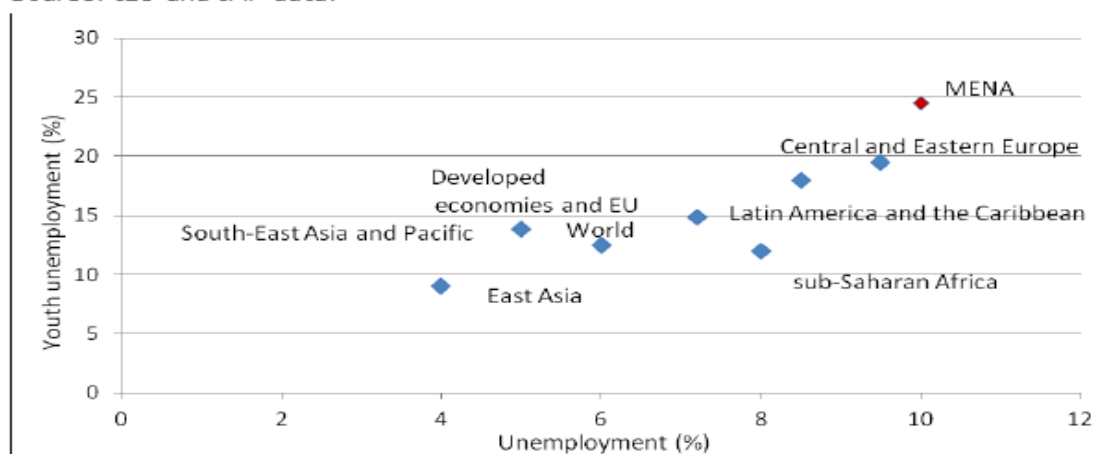
Source: World Bank Global Poverty Monitoring Database.

The issue is the most pressing in Egypt and Morocco, where a significant percentage of the population have to live under the poverty line, Jordan and Tunisia are less affected. Poverty reduction in these states works mainly through food subsidies, which also forms a huge chunk of government expenditure. When food price shocks occur or government budget deficits rise allowing less subsidies for basic foods, it immediately generates societal tensions within these societies. Reducing poverty is a really complex issue and there are no "magic recepies", but developing the economy forms the only possible answer on the long term.

The other really hard issue is youth unemployment. The demographic boom of MENA societies led to an "overload" of young people in these states. The "classic" answer to this was securing "fake" governmental jobs for them and prolonging their educational career. Both of these strategies turned out to be only short-term solutions and generated even more government expenses and educated youngsters with no real work prospects after their graduation. Unemployment (and the under-employment of educated people) gave another boost to societal tensions and contributed significantly to the causes of the recent uprisings in the region. Both youth- and overall unemployment is the highest in the MENA in the world:

Total and Youth Unemployment by Regions (2010)

Source: ILO and IMF data.



Concluding on the societal sector of EU-MENA interdependence, employment, education and migration seem to be the most pressing issues, in which the EU can provide only little help for progress. Taming the migration pressure is one of the top EU priorities and Action Plans reflect this but on the other hand tools in the EU's hands to tackle this problem are limited. (Except for short-term administrative solutions.) MENA governments themselves will have to come up with solutions in these areas and this group of problems can easily become their biggest challenge in the coming years, even capable to decide their success or fail in the long term. Given that these problems are the main factors generating migration flows to the EU, they give also a strong confirmation to our assumption on interdependence.

The environmental sector and the EU's energy dependence

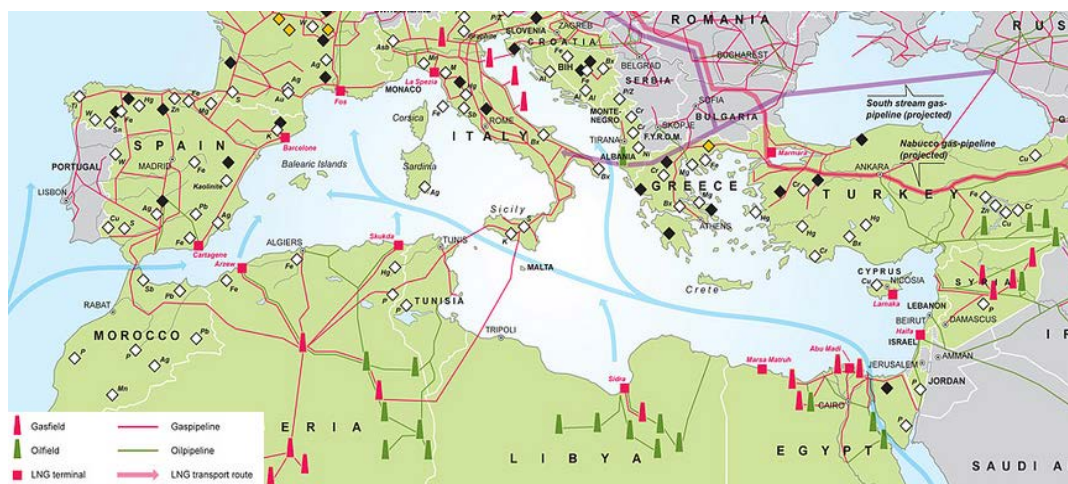
The last set of EU-MENA interdependence issues are found in the environmental sector. Here we will use a wider definition for this sector, which will include not only purely environmental cases but also other ones closely related to them like energy usage. The two main group of interdependence issues arising here will be energy exchanges and networks (both hydrocarbon and clean solar energy) and threats to the Mediterranean Sea itself (both pollution and overfishing).

This field of interdependence includes several issues and involves also the environmental improvement of the MENA's energy sector infrastructure, but the dominance of a "hidden aim" here is undeniable: As EU dependence on MENA hydrocarbon reserves proves to be highly significant, the EU really would like to take some control of this issue and secure the stability of its incoming energy supplies. EU texts formulate this aim as a request to "Enhance energy policy cooperation through information exchange (eg workshops on general energy policy; energy statistics, data mining and forecast systems; energy investments; energy technologies transfer and industrial cooperation; and electricity and gas markets and interconnections." ⁶⁶

Interconnectedness of Euro-Mediterranean gas markets is already undeniable as we can see on this map showing MENA hydrocarbon resources and MENA-EU trade routes and pipes:⁶⁷

⁶⁶Source: Egyptian Action Plan, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/egypt_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

⁶⁷Image source: MEDSEC project, <http://www.medsecnet.org>



Southern EU members import most of their gas and oil supplies from North Africa therefore we can suspect that green technology transfer and industrial cooperation here enjoys only a lower degree of EU ambitions and the real aim is the building of forecast systems and securing of smoothness of supplies. The EU here shows clear signs of a highly "realist approach" aiming to take as much control of MENA supply routes as possible. This can be at least partially the consequence of bad experience with the EU's other main energy supplier, Russia. Strategically thinking, EU oil and gas companies try to acquire as much shares of MENA oil companies as possible and they also take concessions to produce gas and oil in the region themselves. This tendency was also recognized by Russia and Gazprom made efforts to gain control over MENA reserves effectively building an EU-supply monopoly for himself. The final outcome of this race is yet to be seen.

Another significant energy cooperation project is the Mediterranean solar plan. Here environmental motivations are much more obviously present but the EU's economic interests are also widely involved. The plan itself is to bring North African solar power into the EU through the connected "Euro-Med energy ring" (which is the planned connection of EU-MENA electricity transmission networks) and the development of solar power plants throughout the Sahara. This could have a special importance for both of the partners:

"The development of solar power in North Africa, which could bring carbon-free electricity to Europe, might easily be the most important trans-Mediterranean cooperation of future years. The potential is vast. The Desertec project, backed by a consortium of mainly German companies, dreams of 100,000 megawatts (MW) of solar-generating capacity – enough to satisfy all of North Africa's burgeoning electricity needs, and 15 percent of Europe's as well – by 2050, for a €400 billion investment. The (mainly French

and Spanish) Medgrid consortium is aiming for 20,000 MW by 2020, with a quarter coming to Europe."⁶⁸

Of course, beyond the environmental significance, economic interest are also embedded: Germany, the biggest electricity user of Europe will soon phase out its nuclear power plants and plans to substitute them with renewable energy sources. This need is coupled with the supply of German (and other EU) companies' solar power products therefore the plan generates both supply and demand for European industries. The plan itself is far from completed and it's only scheduled to be ready by 2050, but a prototype plant will be installed in Morocco as soon as 2015.

Other, non-energy-related environmental dimensions of cooperation issues are also widespread. Some mentioned by EU documents are⁶⁹: "co-operation with the EU to implement multilateral environmental agreements with particular emphasis on climate change, desertification, biodiversity and waste management", "co-operation to achieve the commitments by the parties with regard provisions under the Kyoto Protocol and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change", "co-operation with the EU for protecting marine environment through the adoption of specific actions", "co-operation regarding the integrated coastal zone management" and several others.

Desertification and water scarcity (affecting seriously agriculture and food resources) form the most pressing issues being present on both shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Parts of Spain, Italy and Greece are seriously threatened by desertification, while on the southern shore the process is already highly visible.⁷⁰ Desalination and the use of underground water resources will play an even more important role in the future of the Mediterranean Basin. The deeper elaboration of all the issues mentioned is far beyond the length limitations of the current work and with mentioning these subjects we only aimed to show again how they strengthen EU-MENA interdependence in this sector by raising this really huge set of issues.

Finally, two areas of the environmental cooperation deserve special attention as both of them are connected with the Mediterranean Sea itself therefore have a symbolic significance. One is the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea and the other, closely related one is fisheries. The pollution effects on the Mediterranean Sea could serve as a perfect example of EU-MENA interdependence: North African sea pollution reaches EU shores quickly and vice versa. This broad sea-centered problem generated many initiatives that target good

⁶⁸Nick Witney and Anthony Dworkin: A Power Audit of EU-North -Africa Relations, ECFR, 2012

⁶⁹See: Egyptian Action Plan: http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/egypt_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

⁷⁰See: <http://www.medsecnet.org/index.php/en/maps/thematic-maps/desertification.html>

environmental governance, access to drinkable water, water management, pollution reduction and protection of the Mediterranean biodiversity. Here again we have no space for a deeper elaboration but the common management of the common Sea could easily turn out to be one of the most important projects bringing together governments and other social actors throughout the whole Mediterranean Basin while making a good case for cooperation.

The case of the fisheries is closely related to Sea management issues but as it has special importance within this field we have to explain it a bit more detailed. One of the problems is the overfishing of the Mediterranean Sea. This was "committed" together by the Northern and Southern Mediterranean states, therefore gives no right of accusation to any of them. We can only recognize the fact that the Sea has reached the limits of its regeneration capabilities and cannot provide more fish resources for the people, its already unsustainably over-fished.⁷¹ This should imply common EU-MENA action in this field as it's requested by the EU already to "Reinforce the cooperation in order to implement the actions identified in the Declaration of the Ministerial Conference for the Sustainable Development of Fishery in the Mediterranean (Venice, 25-26 November 2003) in the framework of the relevant international instruments."⁷² The platform of cooperation therefore seems to be existing but results have yet to come.

The other geographical area of common fisheries is the Atlantic coast of Morocco. In contrast with the Mediterranean Sea, this area is still one of the richest fish resources in the world and therefore a highly valued asset. Fishing rights are exclusively in the hands of Morocco but EU companies (mainly Spanish) are "renting" the fishing rights there. Overfishing of the area by EU vessels raises problems for local Moroccan fishers therefore raise tensions in EU-MENA relations as well. This issue (coupled with the Western Sahara problem) recently rose to high EU policy making levels,⁷³ proving the case of high EU-MENA interdependence again.

Concluding on the environmental sector of interdependence we can state that the sector has a really huge set of issues, out of which some are surprisingly high on the list of priorities. Energy cooperation between the two regions is widespread and beyond the obvious economic reasons it is also very important for the "greening" European industries. (It's worth mentioning here that this is one of the rare cases of EU-MENA interdependence when the EU

⁷¹See: National Geographic, 02.03.2012:

<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2012/03/02/overfishing-leaves-much-of-mediterranean-a-dead-sea-study-finds/>

⁷²Source: Egyptian Action Plan, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/egypt_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

⁷³See: Public Service Europe, 14.12.2011: <http://www.publicserviceeurope.com/article/1267/eu-morocco-fisheries-deal-is-illegal>

is much more dependent on the MENA than vice versa.) Cooperation on desertification, biodiversity, waste management and other environmental issues is less significant yet but they show real EU interests in deepening cooperation in this field. Finally de-pollution of the Mediterranean Sea and the common management of fisheries provide us a symbolic and very important field of interdependence.

V. Conclusions: EU-MENA interdependence and the inter-Regional Security Complex

Summarizing the discovered four sectors of interdependence we can agree with Barry Buzan in that "Adjacency is potent for security because many threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones. The impact of geographical proximity on security interaction is is strongest and most obvious in the military, political, societal and environmental sectors."⁷⁴ These impacts of geographical proximity are widespread but the most important ones we discovered in this study are already making the case to treat EU-MENA interdependence as a strong base for a common inter-Regional Security Complex:

- Hard security challenges, especially fighting transnational terrorism and the instability in the Sahel brings EU-MENA security interests close and form a possible base of common military actions. (This could happen in the current situation in Mali for example.) Nonproliferation of WMDs is another example where inter-regional interests could converge.
- Political ties are close as the recent uprisings (Arab Spring) in the MENA affected seriously the EUs policy making agenda, even triggering military intervention in the case of Libya. Establishing good governance and the rule of law after the uprisings is the main challenge in front of the new MENA governments, and the EU is capable to give technical and financial help for the process.
- Societal EU-MENA interdependencies are -again- widespread: Unemployment and poverty in the MENA are the main causes of migration pressure towards the EU and this pressure is even strengthened by the demonstration effect of modern media outlets showing Arab youth how different their lives in Europe could be. Migration is high on the EU's agenda as well: recognizing the unsustainability of the previous purely administrative migration prevention system, the EU will have to turn towards more sustainable options. These options involve the different economic improvements that the EU could support to its Arab partners which could provide employment and prosperity for MENA citizens on the long term, therefore decrease the migration pressure.

⁷⁴Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003): *Regions and Powers*, Cambridge University Press, p.45

- Environmental and energy issues are showing again a high degree of interdependence. Energy connectedness -both hydrocarbon and electricity- is an already obvious fact, but there are several plans to develop connections even further. New gas pipelines and the possibility of transporting clean solar energy from the MENA to Europe will deepen EU-MENA interdependence in the future even further. On the other hand, overfishing and the pollution of the Mediterranean Sea are common inter-regional "crimes" and have to be resolved also on an inter-regional level giving space for further fields of cooperation in the future.

Reading through all these sectors and issues of interdependence, we can recite again Barry Buzan and wonder if his definition of Regional Security Complexes allows us to call the Euro-Mediterranean space a unified inter-Regional Security Complex. Are they "so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another?"⁷⁵ Our answer to this question is a definite yes. Southern Europe is so interdependent with the MENA that its (and therefore the EU's) security cannot be resolved apart from it.

EU-MENA interdependence and just seems to exactly fulfill Buzan's definition of an (Euro-Med) Regional Security Super-complex: "Strong inter-regional level of security dynamics arising from...spillover into adjacent regions."⁷⁶ In our case this security-related spillover comes mainly from the fragile conditions of MENA states, which prompt the EU with security threats and therefore generates a need for engagement. As this EU engagement starts to be more frequent and widespread, we can start to embrace the idea that these two neighboring regions are morphing into a single security complex.

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⁷⁵Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003): *Regions and Powers*, Cambridge University P., p.44

⁷⁶Ibid, p.62

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